(e) The Guwahati internet node is to be further upgraded and the equipment installation is expected to be completed by 31st March, 2000. Internet nodes are proposed to be installed at Jorhat, Silchar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sibsagar, Golaghat, Nagaon, Karimganj, Tejpur, North Lakhimpur, Bongaigaon, Barpeta and Dhubri. These nodes are expected to be operating during 2000-01. Besides DTS, two additional server systems are being provided at NIC State unit, Guwahati.

A Presence of Point (PoP) at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati will be connected on the country wide terrestrial backbone being set up by ERNET on a 2 Mbps leased line from Calcutta. High Speed servers and routers are proposed to be installed for providing leased as well as dial up connectivity. ERNET is also providing point to point connectivity to the following seven universities:

(i) Arunachal University, Itanagar

(ii) Manipur University, Imphal

(iii) North Eastern Hill University, Shillong

(iv) Tripura University, Agartala

(v) Tezpur University, Assam

(vi) Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh

(vii) University of Roorkee.

(f) Does not arise.

Development of Software Park in Guwahati

1582. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a 'Software Park' is being developed in Guwahati by STPI;

(b) if so, what is being done to ensure its speedy completion;

(c) whether steps have been taken, so far, to attract private investment in the said park;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) has already acquired the land and building for setting up the Software Technology Park (STP) at Guwahati. The building is being renovated so that incubating space can be provided there to the small and medium entrepreneurs. Action is also being taken to procure equipment required for setting up the STP.

STPI and State Governments will jointly be initiating action to attract private investment from the North-Eastern States.

Help in it to Hong Kong

1583. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Hong Kong has sought India's help in information technology;

(b) if so, what was India's response;

(c) what would be the overall benefit that would accrue to India form this; and

(d) whether any decision has been taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been entered into between Government of India and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China on 24.02.2000 for cooperation in the areas of Information Technology and service industries. The areas of common interest are:—

1. Encouraging investment and technology partnerships;
2. Accelerating commercial and industrial exchanges;
3. Fostering business partnerships between companies of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and India;
4. Facilitating technology development efforts;
5. Promoting educational and learning exchange; and
6. Encouraging the exchange of policy and regulatory information.